

# **COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM**

## **TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **MEETING NOTES**

**September 3, 2002**

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION OFFICES – CUSTOM HOUSE  
PORTLAND, OREGON**

**TMT Internet Homepage: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/TMT/index.html>**

# **DRAFT**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### ***1. Greeting and Introductions***

The September 3 Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Rudd Turner of the Corps and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The following is a distillation, not a verbatim transcript, of items discussed at the meeting and actions taken. Anyone with questions or comments about these minutes should call Turner at 503/808-3935.

### ***2. Bonneville Second Powerhouse Corner Collector Construction Schedule and Special Operations Request.***

Turner said it appears, at this point, that construction at Bonneville's second powerhouse should not have a significant impact on chum operations this fall and winter; essentially, the contractor is requesting minimal operation (no more than four units) of PH2, and no spill operation, between mid-November and December 31. Nine units are scheduled to be available at PH1 during the month of December, Turner said, which results in a powerhouse capacity of just over 200 Kcfs. Unless we see unusually high natural or power flows in December, we don't anticipate that powerhouse capacity will be a problem. *[Later in the week, the COE Portland District informed RCC that a maximum tailwater limit will be requested as well, which will result in further flow constraints. This will be discussed further in the 25 September TMT meeting.]*

### ***3. Work Session on 2003 Water Management Plan and Fall/Winter Update, Including Chum Operations.***

Ron Boyce said Oregon's written comments on the 2003 Water Management Plan should be available by the end of this week; he touched on the highlights of those comments at today's meeting, noting that they are not substantially different from Oregon's comments on the 2002 plan. He said that, in general, Oregon likes the format and organization of the 2003 WMP, and thanked the action agencies for their hard work in putting the plan together.

The group devoted a lengthy discussion to the 2003 Plan, offering a variety of comments and clarifying questions. In the course of this discussion, various participants requested a briefing on IDFG's burbot program, the prospects for listing that species under ESA, and on planned burbot operations in 2003. In response to a request, the Corps agreed to give the Water Quality Team a chance to discuss the Plan's water quality appendix (Appendix 4) at the September 10 WQT meeting, and to furnish comments in time to allow the Plan and its appendices to be finalized by September 30.

During the portion of the discussion devoted to the 2003 Spring Creek Hatchery smolt release operation, Scott Bettin said Bonneville is leaning toward not supporting spill for these non-listed fish in 2003. Given that fact, he said, I wanted to try to give the salmon managers enough lead time to explore other, non-spill management alternatives. It would probably make sense to plan as if no spill will be provided, said Shane Scott; that way we're prepared either way.

David Wills said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been working internally on an idea under which the March Spring Creek release would be eliminated. This alternative would require significant support from the tribes and from Bonneville, he said, and we're currently working to gather that support. However, it will not be ready for implementation this spring, Wills added.

Would it be possible to rear the fish at, say, Washougal? Bettin asked. There has been some discussion of doing some supplemental rearing at other locations, but I'm not sure whether Washougal was one of the sites under consideration, Wills replied. Boyce said that, in his opinion, the usual spill operation in support of the Spring Creek Hatchery release should stay in the 2003 Water Management Plan for now, given the fact that Bonneville has not yet made a final decision on whether or not to provide that spill. That's fine, as long as we continue to explore non-spill alternatives, Bettin said.

Jim Litchfield said he had heard that there had been an effort to transport smolts from Spring Creek Hatchery in years past – did that happen? he asked. I don't remember the exact year, Wills replied, but there was an effort to transport a portion of those fish; my recollection is that when the transported fish returned, there was a significant amount of straying to other systems and facilities. In response to a request, Wills said he will check the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service archives to see whether he can find the report on the Spring Creek transportation experiment, and will report back at the TMT's September 11 meeting.

Turner reiterated the Corps' intent to finalize the 2003 Water Management Plan by September 30; he added that it is possible that Appendix 4 will still be in draft form at that time, depending on how soon the Water Quality Team is able to furnish their comments. He asked that this review proceed in a timely manner so that the overall Plan can be completed on schedule.

Next, various representatives from WDFW and the Fish and Wildlife Service provided a presentation on chum salmon. This presentation, requested by the TMT, was designed to answer

three questions:

- What did we learn from 2001/2002 and before?
- What are the objectives for 2002/2003?
- How can we achieve those objectives?

Will you be producing a map of the chum spawning sites? Bettin asked. We will be producing a map showing redd locations for both chum and chinook spawners in 2001/2002, Todd Hillsen replied.

The presentation touched on the following major topic areas:

- 2001/2002 adult chum spawning ground counts, by week
- Peak spawning counts at the Ives/Pierce Island complex, 2001/2002 (255 adults, during the week of November 26)
- 2001/2002 chum counts at other, non Ives/Pierce Island spawning sites in the mainstem Columbia and tributaries. It was observed that chum spawning was much more widespread than expected, geographically, in 2001/2002, with some chum spawning observed as far upstream as the outlet of Multnomah Falls.
- The total Lower Columbia chum run, 2001 (unexpanded): 5,500 fish, (expanded): 10,000+
- Chinook and chum spawn timing and emergence numbers and timing in 2001/2002. Fall chinook: spawning began on October 22 and ended on December 10; emergence began on March 11 and ended on May 18. Chum: spawning began on November 12 and ended on December 20; emergence began in mid-March 25 and ended in mid-May.
- While population estimates are not complete for the 2001/2002 chum spawning year, preliminary estimates of the total catch of smolts in traps in 2002 were 146,725 at Hamilton Springs and 106,123 at Hardy Creek.
- The chum salvage plan for 2002/2003: funding has been requested for chum salvage this year; it is a possibility that fish will be taken for re-introduction to Duncan Creek, and possibly Hamilton/Hardy and/or the mainstem Columbia. It will be up to the fish managers to decide whether or not some sort of intervention is necessary, one of the WDFW participants observed.

Joe Hymer noted that WDFW's final report on the 2001/2002 chum spawning season will be available in March, although more refined analyses of the data from 2001/2002 should be available within the next month. At Boyce's request, Turner said it would be possible to get an update on the Corps' chum-related activities at the September 25 TMT meeting. It was further agreed that WDFW and the Fish and Wildlife Service will attempt to provide a comprehensive GPS map of all of the known chum spawning sites in the Lower Columbia.

When do we need to start discussing what we want to do for this year? Bettin asked. We'll need to have some fairly intensive discussion about whether or not the information collected to date warrants a departure from the BiOp operation for chum, Boyce observed. We also need to discuss the potential impacts of the chum operation on Vernita Bar operations, Boyce said. It was agreed that this discussion will be taken up again at the TMT's September 25

meeting.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the questions that need to be answered in the course of the TMT's discussion of the 2002/2003 chum operation. These included:

- What impact, if any, could chum operations have on Vernita Bar operations?
- Did last year's "staggering" (gradually raising tailwater elevation at Bonneville to allow staggered access to more and more spawning area) help or hurt chum?
- Was reverse load factoring an issue, in terms of dewatering redds?

In response to the reverse load factoring question, one WDFW participant said field crews observed occasional instances of a few redds being dewatered, but for the most part, the spawning grounds were pretty well watered up. There certainly weren't any observations of mass dewaterings, he said.

In summary, Silverberg asked the action agencies to work together to try to answer these questions; she asked all TMT participants to consider the 2002/2003 chum operation and come to the TMT's September 25 meeting prepared to discuss it in detail. It was so agreed. It was also agreed that today's chum presenters will attend the September 25 TMT meeting, if possible.

#### ***4. Next TMT Meeting Date.***

There is a TMT conference call to discuss the end of Dworshak operations scheduled for 3 p.m. Monday, September 9. The next face-to-face meeting of the Technical Management Team is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11 at 9 a.m. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, Bonneville contractor.

### **TMT Attendance List**

September 3, 2002

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Rudd Turner	COE
Tony Norris	USBR
Scott Bettin	BPA
David Wills	USFWS
Shane Scott	WDFW
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Jim Litchfield	Consultant (Montana)
Richelle Harding	D. Rohr & Associates

Chris Ross	NOAA
Russ George	WMCI
Mike O'Bryant	CBB
Scott Boyd	COE
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Joe Hymer	WDFW/PSMFC
Nic Lane	BPA
Dick Cassidy	COE
Ruth Burris	PGE
Donna Silverberg	Facilitator
Nancy Uusitalo	USFWS
Patrick Frazier	ODFW